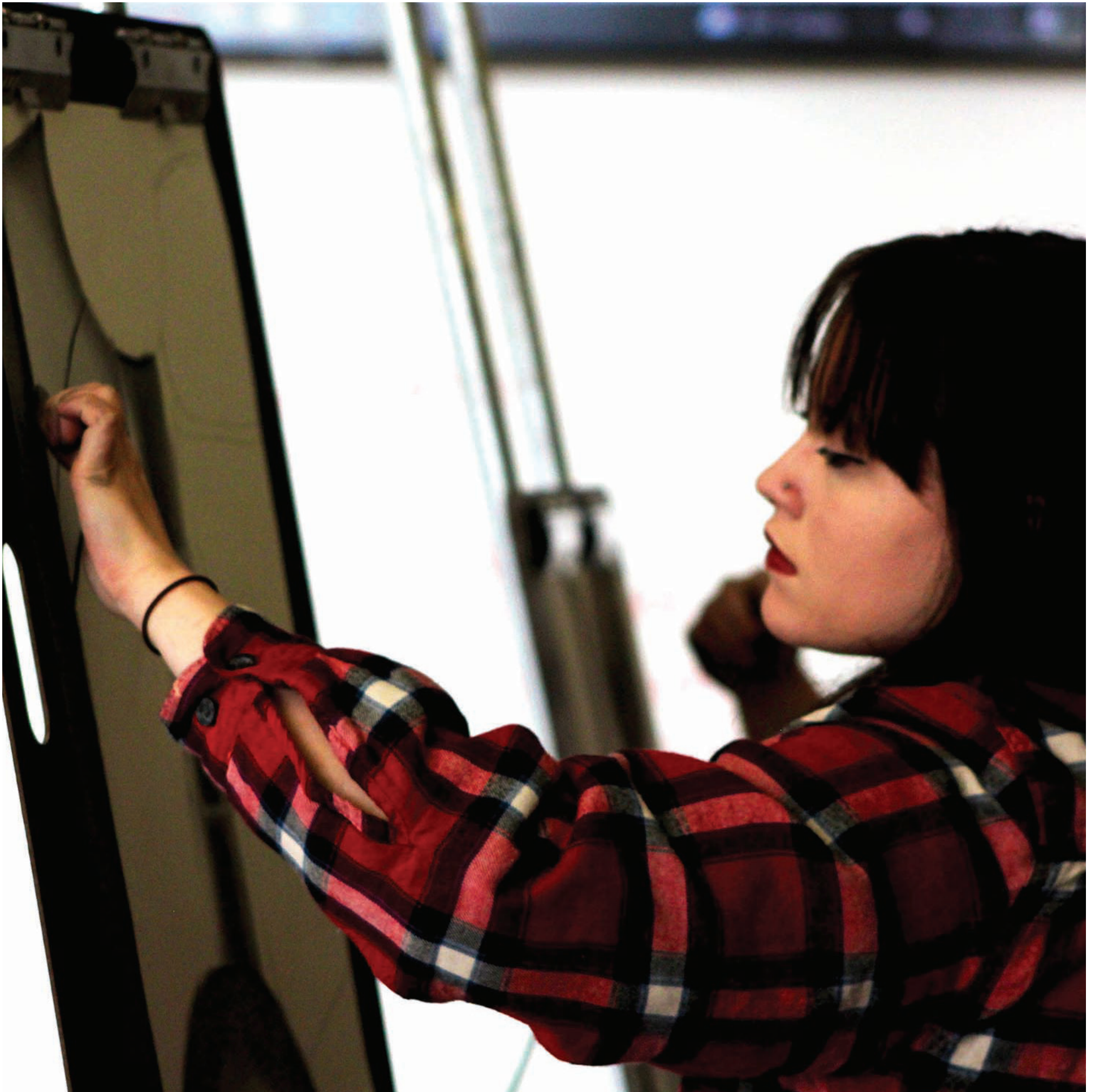


THE MYSTICIAN



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Student Whitney Gross takes part in the creative process on the BSC Campus. (Credit: Taylor Aasen)

THE MYSTICIAN

PUBLISHED BY THE STUDENTS – FOR THE STUDENTS

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The Mystic Media Statement and Disclaimer

The purpose of college media is to serve and give voice to the students.

We, as the student-based forum of journalism on the Bismarck State College campus, provide content that is informative, fair, concise and of importance to students and the community. With this goal in mind, Mystic Media is dedicated to accuracy and maintaining ethical journalistic practices.

We strive to give a voice to student issues and policies within the local community.

Our goal is to incorporate as many students as possible and be an outlet for student expression.

Mystic Media strives to be objective and is not affiliated with any outside organization.

Mystic Media upholds the principles guaranteed by the First Amendment and utilizes these rights to bring diverse, entertaining and thought-provoking material to the college community. Thoughts expressed may not be the opinion of all the staff or BSC community.

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with letters to the editor

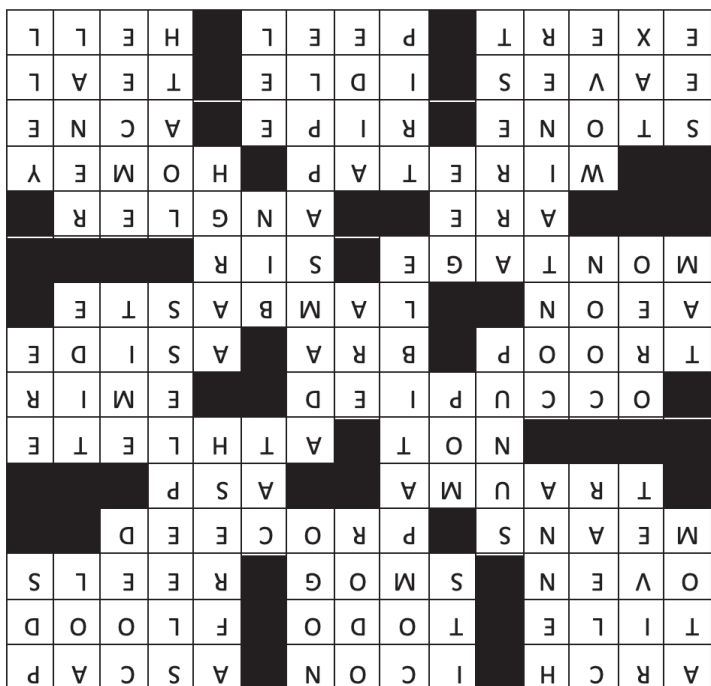
or any concerns/comments regarding this publication.

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Crossword Information

BSC's own Language, Literature and Communication Department Chair (and crossword aficionado) Michael Tomanek has created and submitted this month's puzzle. Experiment, explore and try to find the answers yourself for the most satisfaction.

The crossword puzzle can be found on page 7.



LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Hi all,

December, huh? What a crazy and wild ride this semester has been. It feels like it flew by—very slowly. My first go at editor has been a big learning experience, and I thank you all for sticking with me. I have learned a lot and still have a ways to go, but I am happy with not only my progress, but with Mystic Media as a whole. We all came into our positions brand new, with some being in their very first semester. I am so proud of how far they have come. I am looking forward to the holiday break to refresh and come back for a new start in the Spring. I hope you all enjoy your break and holiday season.

Go big or go home,

Amy



MYSTIC MEDIA

BISMARCK STATE COLLEGE STUDENT PRODUCTIONS



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BSC GRANTED \$38 MILLION FOR POLYTECHNIC EXPANSION



BSC President Douglas Jensen speaks at the press conference on Dec. 1. (Credit: Amy Doll)

By Amy Doll
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

On Nov. 15, 2021, North Dakota Governor Doug Burgum signed Senate Bill 2345 granting Bismarck State College \$38 million from the state's federal Rescue Plan coronavirus aid to advance its expanded mission as North Dakota's Polytechnic Institution. BSC, along with legislative, industry, community and educational partners, presented a press conference to outline the expanded polytechnic mission, new career pathways and plans for a polytechnic education center on the BSC campus on Wednesday, Dec. 1 in the Basin Electric Auditorium inside the BSC National Energy Center of Excellence.

"We are extremely appreciative of the level of confidence and commitment that we receive from the Governor's office and from our legislators," BSC President Douglas Jensen said.

Along with President Jensen, a variety of speakers including Governor Doug Burgum and North Dakota University System Chancellor Mark Hagerott had a chance to give their regards.

"This is an opportunity for this school to help lead all of higher-ed in North Dakota to understand at the most basic level that education has to be more responsive to workforce needs and more responsive to the signals of the private sectors," Burgum said.

The BSC Polytechnic Center is slated to break ground in 2022, with a hopeful opening in 2024.

"BSC is now in a position to build a talent pipeline that will help the economy for many years to come," Jensen said.

BSC's transition as the only polytechnic institution in the region began in late 2018 and has since commissioned two studies with the National Coalition of Advanced Technology Centers (NCATC) and Gray Associates to determine the skills, technical talent and degree programs needed in high-priority occupations to impact and sustain business and industry development and economic growth.



North Dakota Governor Doug Burgum was also present at the press conference. (Credit: Amy Doll)

CLIMATE CHANGE AFFECTING THE MIDWEST

By Sam Rosario
MYSTIC MEDIA COORDINATOR



The Earth is increasing in temperature, oceans are warming up, the glaciers are melting, and sea levels are rising. Ecosystems are suffering from droughts, lack of water and food supply causing animals to struggle and even go extinct. These things can be identified as results of climate change.

According to “Climate Change Terms and Definitions,” a webpage produced by the University of California at Davis, “Climate change refers to significant changes in global temperature, precipitation, wind patterns and other measures of climate that occur over several decades or longer.”

Things that cause climate change are volcanic sulfur released from eruptions,

solar cycles, changes in the orbit, and the most familiar causes are carbon dioxide and greenhouse gasses increasing the temperature of the Earth’s atmosphere.

Human activity also affects climate change by burning fossil fuels, deforestation, over-farming livestock and urbanization releasing large amounts of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere where there are already naturally occurring amounts of greenhouse gasses causing the effects to amplify.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change is an assembly under the United Nations to evaluate the science of climate change. The panel produced their Sixth Assessment Report on Climate Change released on Aug. 9, 2021.

For the Midwest, the report forecasts increased high precipitation events are more likely in central North America as climate change continues to worsen. Winters will be more damp due to increased temperatures. Extreme weather will be more expected in the years to come causing dry weather to increase. This dry weather may produce fires and increased droughts in the central region of the U.S.

The weather in North Dakota has increased by almost two and a half degrees over the past century. More specifically, the temperatures during the winter and at night have also increased over recent decades. The temperatures increasing means increased precipitation in the spring, warmer winters, and hotter summers with increased droughts. Dry weather with increased temperatures will minimize yields over time making it difficult for growing crops and feeding livestock. Ranchers in this region may find it difficult to feed cattle because of the lack of hay and the prices of bales increasing.

The results of climate change, naturally occurring and caused by human activity, may be irreversible and inevitable, but either way there needs to be action taken to support agriculture and production workers.

BSC SEEKS NOMINATIONS FOR OUTSTANDING ALUMNI

Whether a Bismarck Junior College graduate between 1940-1986 or a Bismarck State College graduate between 1987-2021, BJC/BSC alumni have found success all over the world in their careers, as community, state and national leaders and furthered organizations and causes as committed volunteers.

Each year, the BSC National Alumni Association recognizes outstanding alumni for the contributions and accomplishments that have come after their time at BJC/BSC. Nominations are currently being accepted for the 2022 BSC Alumni of the Year, Rising Star and Legacy Family awards.

These awards honor BSC alumni for distinguished service, career success, leadership and legacy.

Nominees must be a BJC/BSC graduate, but anyone can submit a nomination. The award criteria is listed on the nomination form.

Nomination forms are available online at bismarckstate.edu/alumniawards or by contacting Christina Burns at the BSC Alumni Office (701) 224-2486. The nomination deadline is Wednesday, Dec. 1.

Award recipients will be honored May 12, 2022, on the BSC campus.

BSC NAMED AS A TOP 150 COMMUNITY COLLEGE AND ELIGIBLE FOR 1 MILLION DOLLAR ASPEN PRIZE

The Aspen Institute College Excellence Program has named Bismarck State College as one of 150 community colleges eligible to compete for the \$1 million 2023 Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence, the nation’s signature recognition of high achievement and performance among America’s community colleges. Based on strong and improving student outcomes—including in learning, completion rates, employment rates and earnings, and equity—only 150 of the nation’s community colleges have been invited to apply for the Aspen Prize.

The 150 community colleges named eligible to compete for the 2023 Aspen Prize were selected from a pool of nearly 1,000 public two-year colleges in the nation using publicly available data on student outcomes. Located in 34 states in urban, rural, and suburban areas, serving as few as 230 students and as many as 57,000 students, the colleges represent the diversity and depth of the community

college sector, according to the Aspen College Excellence Program. BSC is the only North Dakota college selected to compete for the 2023 Aspen Prize.

The Aspen Prize, which is awarded every two years, focuses on student success and looks at outstanding achievements in four areas: learning; certificate and degree completion; employment and earnings; and high levels of access and success for minority and low-income students. The idea is to share promising practices as well as spotlight the need for a quality postsecondary education to attain good jobs and careers, according to officials.

The top 10 finalists for the 2023 Aspen Prize will be named in spring/summer 2022. The Aspen Institute will then visit each of the finalists and collect additional quantitative data, including employment and earnings data. A jury will then select in late spring 2023 a grand prize winner, finalists with distinction and rising stars.

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AGRICULTURE CLUB PLANS A **JOLLY GOOD TIME** FOLLOWING MONTANA TRIP

By Seth Iverson
REPORTER

Two years ago, the Ag Club hosted a dance. But the very next year, COVID took it away. This year, to save Christmas cheer, they're giving us something special.

Every year, Bismarck State College Agriculture Club hosts a Halloween dance and a Christmas dance at the Career Academy. This year, the club had a change of plans.

"Since we went on the tour from the 25th to the 27th, and so as a club, we decided that to do the tour and try to get a Halloween dance together just wasn't in everybody's schedule," said Calli Hauck, Ag Club's Student Representative. With this change of events, the club has decided to put all their effort into the upcoming Christmas dance.

The dance will involve the standard holiday fare, where there will be food, contests and music all night long. Dinner will be provided for students and will consist of BBQ foods such as



The Christmas Bash will take place at the BSC Career Academy. (Credit: Seth Iverson)

brisket and pulled pork. Aside from the dance, there will also be an ugly sweater contest where prizes will be handed out. Mystic Media will DJ the event.

Dances were part of the Ag Club events for decades with Marko Davinic overseeing them for all 5 years of his career. Davinic said that the dances

are a way that the club can provide the community with entertainment and a chance to socialize with other students when they would not otherwise be able to do so. Funds are used to cover the catering costs and the remaining money will go to future trips and dances.

Due to the shutdown last year, a lot

of activities such as large gatherings on and off campus were cancelled, including both of the Ag club's dances. Fortunately, with the year-long gap between social events, Davinic feels that students who weren't able to see each other in person this year would increase event turnout. Additionally, Davinic stated that the club made sure to have the dance the week before finals so students don't have to worry about balancing grades and preparing for an upcoming dance.

"Everybody's busy with them. It's gonna be right kind of between the last day of classes, regular classes and finals and then kids can actually students can relax and enjoy a nice, kind of, get together dance," Davinic said.

The dance is scheduled for Tuesday, Dec 7, at 7:00 p.m. in the multi-purpose room of the Career Academy, which is located at 1221 College Drive. All BSC students, along with invited guests, are welcome to attend. Students will need a school ID to enter.



Montana trip photos submitted by Marko Davinic.

CREATIVITY IS CRITICAL



Andrea Fagerstrom looks on while helping with the creative process. (Credit: Taylor Aasen)

By Taylor Aasen
MYSTICAST EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Creativity is like yoga for the brain. Stretching the brain's muscles in order to sculpt a piece of clay, build a tool to solve an issue or write a poem. Practicing creativity keeps one's brain on its toes and allows one to think outside of the box.

Creativity helps with the expression of self. When people express themselves, it allows their voices to be heard in ways that others can appreciate. The fact that someone is able to take their pain and anger and turn it into something beautiful through the work of art is truly inspiring.

Assistant Professor of Art, Andrea Fagerstrom has been teaching at Bismarck State College for about seven years.

"I love teaching," Fagerstrom said. She was a preschool teacher before starting at BSC and said that there are many similarities between the two groups of people. "You have these kids in preschool where it's probably their first time without their parents; when you go to a first-year college, it's the same thing. This might be the first time being apart from your parents."

For years and years, our ancestors have been practicing art. Each piece of work has a story behind it and most of it comes from emotions.

"Art is for everyone and is an



Creativity helps with the expression of self. (Credit: Taylor Aasen)

integral part of humanity," Fagerstrom said. "If you go back to before we had written word, we expressed and left remnants of our civilization by the art on our caved walls."

Fagerstrom also said practicing creativity is a good way to express yourself and relieve stress. "I think mental health-wise and just managing life, it benefits from art," Fagerstrom said.

Expressing one's emotions through art helps to alleviate stress and anxiety. "If you can get outside of yourself a little bit by creating your own artwork, or appreciating someone else's, it snaps you back into reality and you can let go of all that stress or whatever is on your shoulders," Fagerstrom said.

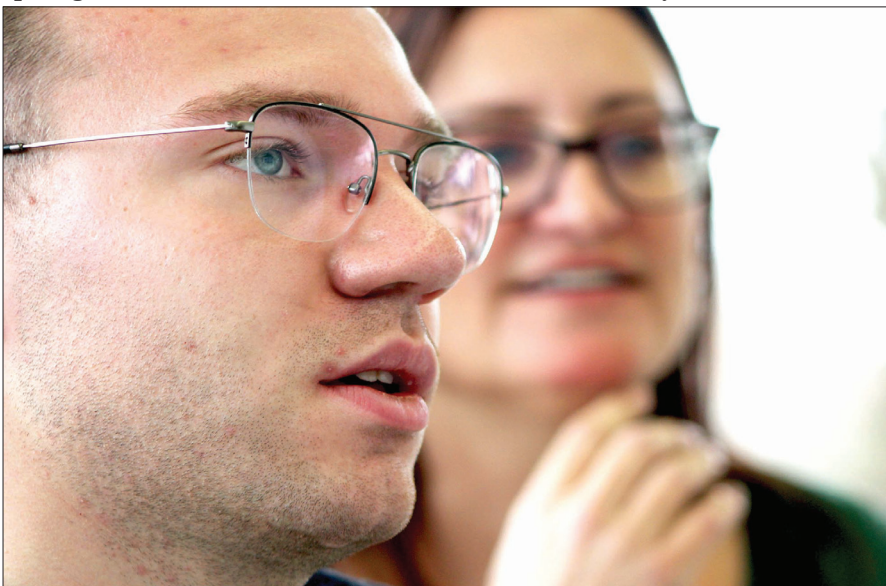
Practicing creativity also aids in critical thinking skills. "When you're looking at your job, or your career path. You want creative thinkers.

You want critical thinkers. You want problem solvers. That's art," Fagerstrom explained.

Creativity can be used in any work environment, academics, or life in general. This is why it is important for people to practice creative classes. College students benefit from taking art classes.

"It helps me a lot not only outside of my academics but also with my academics. It lets me know kind of who I am becoming through BSC," said Riley Griffin, BSC art student and Econ major.

This is why it is important for people to practice creative classes. This helps them open up and learn how to be themselves more freely.



Riley Griffin receives feedback from Fagerstrom. (Credit: Taylor Aasen)

LITERARY MOVIE NIGHT:

“THE DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS”



By Chad Erickstad
COLUMNIST

Plants that terrorize and eat people is a surprisingly popular trope in horror and science fiction circles. Yes, plants—shrubs, flowers, even grass—have been used to scare people, presumably causing them to stay up late into the night, too frightened to sleep, perhaps checking under their beds for stray leaves.

It may be hard to believe that anybody would be afraid of their favorite fern, but some of these books and movies have been quite successful. “The Ruins” (2006) is a horror novel by Scott Smith that

features killer vines and was so well-regarded, even Stephen King, the “master of horror,” gave it his seal of approval. It was later developed into a movie (2008).

“The Little Shop of Horrors” (1960) was a movie, then a stage musical (1982), then another movie (1986), and starred a plant that fed on human blood.

But when I think of plant-based horror, I think of “The Day of the Triffids” (1951).

Written by John Wyndham, the novel is a post-apocalyptic tale not unlike H. G. Wells’ “The War of the Worlds” (1897), another science fiction classic. Both novels depict humankind’s struggle to survive an invasion. Wells uses Martians, stomping around in giant, three-legged fighting-machines, vaporizing people with heat-rays, as his invasion force. Wyndham goes in a different direction. He uses plants.

Wyndham’s plants are called triffids. They are large. They can walk. And they are carnivorous. Reaching as high as ten feet, triffids have a three-legged base, a long stem with leafless branches that create a creepy noise by drumming on the stem flower at the end of the stem that contains a ten-foot-long stinger.

The triffid lashes at its victims with its stinger, usually at the victim’s face and eyes. Direct contact results in

death. The triffid then roots next to the victim, feeding on it as it decomposes. Yikes.

The triffids aren’t fast, “contriving to cover the ground at something like an average walking pace,” but they are numerous.

Wyndham’s novel was adapted into a movie in 1962. I found it free to watch on the streaming service Tubi. Based on the movie poster, I was hoping for a fun, “so bad it’s good” kind of B-movie experience. Unfortunately, the movie was too good for that, but not quite good enough to be particularly memorable.

Like the novel, the movie’s protagonist is named Bill Masen. He is in the hospital, with his eyes bandaged from an accident.

From this point forward, the movie strays from the novel.

In the novel, the triffids’ existence is not explained. Masen theorizes that they were bioengineered by the Soviet Union and released on the world, but he is only guessing.

While Masen is in the hospital with his eyes bandaged, the Earth was bombarded with a meteor shower so magnificent that most of its inhabitants couldn’t resist watching it. Unfortunately, this bizarre light show results in causing blindness for anybody who viewed it.

In the novel, Masen saves a writer named Josella Playton from being

forced by a blind man to lead him around. Masen and Playton stick together after this.

In the movie, Playton is replaced by a little orphan girl named Susan.

There are other differences, but it is the way the movie ends that separates it most from the novel.

The ending of the novel is open-ended and ambiguous. The triffids have not been defeated—but Masen is hopeful. He concludes, “We believe now that we can see our way, but there is still a lot of work and research to be done before the day when we, or our children, or their children, will cross the narrow straits on a great crusade to drive the triffids back and back with ceaseless destruction until we have wiped out the last one of them from the face of the land that they have usurped.”

The ending of the movie is hokey and lazy. It turns out, sea water causes the triffids to dissolve. That’s it. So, the world is saved.

Despite the contrived ending, the movie is better than I was expecting. The acting is very good, as is the directing. It just wasn’t what I wanted: either a laugh-out-loud camp-fest or an iconic sci-fi masterpiece.

You can skip the movie. But do read the novel. And keep your plants watered and happy.

December 2021

Michael R. Tomanek

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ACROSS

- 1 Curve
- 5 Notable
- 9 Music rights grp.
- 14 Scrabble piece
- 15 List title
- 16 Run over
- 17 Mitt type
- 18 Pollution
- 19 Spools
- 20 Lakota activist Russell
- 22 Move forward
- 24 Emotional turmoil
- 26 Snake
- 27 _____ a chance
- 28 Footballer, e.g.
- 32 Taken, as in a chair
- 36 Muslim ruler
- 37 Scout group
- 38 Bikini top
- 39 Parenthetical
- 40 Long period
- 41 Criticize severely
- 43 Artistic composite
- 46 Elton’s title
- 47 Exist
- 48 Fisherman or journalist
- 52 Spying option
- 55 Cozy
- 57 Rock
- 59 Ready
- 61 Zits
- 62 Over-hangs
- 63 Lazy
- 64 Aqua
- 65 Exercise force
- 66 Pare
- 67 Satan’s domain

DOWN

- 1 The A in bomb
- 2 Metal fastener
- 3 Transparent
- 4 Tattoo alternative
- 5 Belonging to that
- 6 Agreeable
- 7 Smell
- 8 Scrapped flight
- 9 _____ start (two words)
- 10 A state in Seattle?
- 11 Dorm type
- 12 MSN rival
- 13 911 responders
- 21 Dawn
- 23 Feline
- 25 Broom relative
- 28 Neck bump
- 29 Send
- 30 Gain competitor
- 31 Prior to, in verse
- 32 Cookie brand
- 33 Hat skin type
- 34 Tupperware, e.g.
- 35 Pitcher stat
- 37 Hat
- 39 Cartoon anguish
- 42 Tote
- 44 Charge
- 45 _____ whiz
- 49 Reluctant
- 50 Host
- 51 Kidney related
- 52 Made a basket, for instance
- 53 Vacation
- 54 Assist
- 56 Scream
- 57 View
- 58 Fee type
- 60 Slithery fish

EVERY STUDENT'S VOICE

QUESTION: **WHAT DO THE HOLIDAYS MEAN TO YOU?**

- “Family time.
Having a good time
with your **family**.
Eating a big meal”
Alexis Johnson
- “A time to spend
with **family**
and give
and help
the community
around you—
[A time to]
keep your heart open”
Mackenzie Parker
- “It means spending time
with **family**.”
Lydia Oster
- “Being with **family**”
Jessie Aull
- “Spending time
with **family**”
Hannah Sandberg
- “It means bringing the
family together”
Jeffrey Sandover
- “Coming together with
family, not just
celebrating the holiday,
but being with family”
Holly Mac Arthur

QUESTIONS: **WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE ... :**

... HOLIDAY SONG?

- “All I want for
Christmas is you”
Alexis Johnson
- “All I want for
Christmas is you”
Jeffrey Sandoval
- “Jingle Bells”
Lydia Oster
- “O Holy Night”
Jessie Aull
- “White Christmas”
Hannah Sandberg
- “All I Want for Christmas”
Holly MacArthur
- “All I Want for Christmas”
by Mariah Carey
Mackenzie Parker

... HOLIDAY MOVIE?

- “Home Alone”
Alexis Johnson
- “The Polar Express”
Jeffrey Sandoval
- “Home Alone”
Lydia Oster
- “Charlie Brown’s Christmas”
Jessie Aull
- “ELF”
Hannah Sandberg
- “Nightmare Before Christmas”
Holly MacArthur
- “I don’t really watch
holiday-themed movies.”
Mackenzie Parker

... GIFT?

- “When I got a TV.
My sister wanted one,
but I got one instead.”
Alexis Johnson
- “Probably some art supplies”
- Jeffrey Sandover
- “Probably an Apple watch”
- Lydia Oster
- “A loom”
Jessie Aull
- “A puppy”
Hannah Sandberg
- “A puppy--Australian Shepherd”
Holly MacArthur
- “Concert tickets to a band called ‘Set
It Off’”
Mackenzie Parker



**ASPIRING TO GIVE
EVERY STUDENT
A VOICE:**

This is our mission statement at The Mystician. It is often said that in higher education, we grow as people and become who we are through learning and experience. We know you would like to let yourselves be heard, and this new addition to our student newspaper is just the way to do that. You will often see our reporters and columnists out and about getting interviews. If you would like to have your voice heard here, answer openly and honestly to them and allow your picture to accompany your opinion.



WHITE FRAGILITY



By Sam Rosario
MYSTIC MEDIA COORDINATOR

In America we live in a system that was created to serve white people. Black and indigenous people as well as people of color have to deal with the ramifications of living in this system that is actively working against them. Everyone is told they are equal, but what they experience as a result of this are different from the other. When BIPOC ask for equality, some white people do not like this because it is assumed that everyone is created equal and presumed to have the same liberties. A lack of education and awareness is not an excuse for white people to continue this behavior.

White fragility is a term made popular by Robin Diangelo meaning the defensive reaction that white people have when faced with things relating to racial inequalities or injustices. Diangelo is an American author with a bachelor's degree in sociology and Ph.D. in multicultural education. She has written multiple books on racial discourse. Talking about racial inequalities can be difficult for white people, and because of their superior position in this country, they do not have to come to terms with white privilege since they live in a system that already benefits them. Essentially, white people can

continue to be ignorant about racial inequalities, and it will affect nothing because the system was designed for them.

Diangelo is white and is also ignorant in her own way where she educates white people based on her own standards of white fragility and her critical way of thinking is the right way. The purpose behind her feeling the need to be an educator and set the standard can possibly root from a white savior complex. This behavior is not intentional as it is subconscious but should not excuse her from her own ignorance.

In an article written by clinical pharmacist, Jessica Caporuscio, for Medical News Today, she states, "People experiencing white fragility may not be racist, but their actions, behaviors, and feelings may promote racism. Avoiding the topic of race contributes to racism. By disregarding the notions of white superiority and white privilege, racism will continue to hold its place in society."

- Freedom of speech.
- Freedom of religion.
- The right to bear arms.

These freedoms are granted to us as citizens. This may be convenient for a white Christian man with a collection of rifles, but for a Black or Middle Eastern man, exercising these freedoms, in public especially, may result in negative attention from pedestrians and even law enforcement. BIPOC are often stereotyped to be involved in crimes and gang violence portraying bad reputations in the media.

BIPOC are demonized as a result of these double standard amendments. When they are aware that the system is biased but are constantly told they have the same rights and guarantees by the white people who believe that, they are being gaslighted to believe otherwise and reprimanded for believing such a thing. The constitution says "All men were created equal," so some of them think that must be the truth and as a

result, the "oppressed" groups are just looking for attention. This is how they excuse counter protests against Black Lives Matter. There are also many white people who are completely aware of racial inequalities and use that to their benefit.

The police never treat me poorly.

If you just don't commit crimes you have nothing to worry about.

Just do what you're told and you'll be fine."

White people use this mentality to justify abusive actions carried out by the police and the justice system. If it does not happen to white people, by their logic, it does not happen at all. If it did happen, it was the person's fault. If they do not experience what someone else does, it does not exist for them. In order to fully understand how BIPOC struggle, it has to happen to white people.

In most spaces white people are the default. This is the reason why there are no scholarships, social groups, or activities specifically advertised toward white people because most niches or industries are predominantly white by default. Inclusivity exists because there is no room for BIPOC in white spaces. They are forced to make their own spaces apart from white people in order to be included. Some white people see this as a form of exclusion or find it offensive because BIPOC are forced to protest highlighting their inequalities and struggles, which sometimes leads to spotlighting them in the media and in politics. Media coverage can also be very negative and damaging to BIPOC.

This also leads to creating changes in how we interact with each other in social settings both in positive and negative ways. Progressive movements force white people to acknowledge their own ignorance. This is also why critical race theory is unpopular among conservatives and many white people because it implicates them in racism against BIPOC. Racism is a sensitive topic for most white people and when confronted with it, most

try to separate themselves from the actions and beliefs of other white people without actually reflecting on their own biases because they find it offensive that they were generalized.

Although I may not agree with some of what is written and even her execution of providing teaching tools for white people on race, Diangelo does provide interesting points. Diangelo states in her article, "White Fragility," for the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, that white people benefit from individualism because they can view themselves as different from other white people excluding themselves from the actions those other white people also expecting to receive the benefit of the doubt for being individuals. They can still recognize whiteness but as an individual issue.

"Whites invoke these seemingly contradictory discourses—we are either all unique or we are all the same—interchangeably. Both discourses work to deny white privilege and the significance of race. Further, on the cultural level, being an individual or being a human outside of a racial group is a privilege only afforded to white people. In other words, people of color are almost always seen as "having a race" and described in racial terms ("the black man") but whites rarely are ("the man"), allowing whites to see themselves as objective and non-racialized. In turn, being seen (and seeing ourselves) as individuals outside of race frees whites from the psychic burden of race in a wholly racialized society. Race and racism become their problems, not ours. Challenging these frameworks becomes a kind of unwelcome shock to the system."

White fragility will continue to limit our development as a diverse society and create issues that will further divide us. Even an educated individual in multicultural affairs such as Diangelo is complicit in perpetuating ignorance.



Tune in Live at
bscmyx.com

NORMALIZING STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH



By Mikaela Sanders
COLUMNIST

It's that time again. The semester is in its final stretch, but we are still in the thick of it. Classes are getting intense, and assignments are stacking up. Not only do we have overwhelming amounts of schoolwork, but family, work and life obligations as well. Students around the country have become so busy that their mental health is suffering. Stress and burnout have become normalized within student populations in an unhealthy way.

It's time colleges and universities prioritize and normalize mental health.

It's time that we normalize mental health instead of normalizing burnout.

When students talk about their daily lives, burnout and stress are commonplace—almost a rite of passage. On social media, students glorify their lack of sleep and brag about how much coffee they drink just to get through the day.

The mental health of college students has been analyzed and studied in detail, especially in the wake of the recent pandemic. The American Psychological Association has found that college student mental health is a growing concern. While some pressure and deadlines can be healthy and teach us valuable time management skills, periods of intense pressure and stress can also be a significant source of anxiety, depression and feelings of burnout. Burnout can manifest in many ways but is basically known to be the opposite of thriving.

Bridgette Bewick, an associate professor in health research at the University of Leeds and Helen Stallman, a Hospital Research Foundation Fellow at the University of South Australia, wrote in an article published in the Independent on September 10, 2018, titled How Universities Can Combat the Student Mental Health "... many students report elevated levels of anxiety and distress. Often when students feel stressed, they reduce their sleep time, eat poorly, and stop exercising. But these are the very things that can help to regulate emotions and manage stress. Other unhealthy coping strategies can include negative self-talk, procrastination, emotional eating, drinking alcohol and becoming socially withdrawn."

Studies from the Anxiety and Depression Association of America (ADAA) have shown that 85% of college students said they felt overwhelmed by everything they had to do at some point in the past year. Many scholars agree that mental health problems are among the top

reasons why students drop out of college, including Gregg Henriques Ph.D., who calls the state of mental health among college students "a crisis."

Students should not be forced to choose between a healthy mental state and good grades, but instead, encouraged to draw boundaries and find balance in their busy lives.

While students strive to achieve, unrealistically lofty standards of achievement can cause students to experience elevated levels of stress, which may cause them to reach for unhealthy coping mechanisms to keep them going or calm them down. Such high stress levels wreak havoc on the systems of the body, and when poor health causes more stressors, a cycle ensues. There must be steps taken to promote the mental health of students in a long-lasting, sustainable way.

What can educational institutions do?

Colleges and universities have been experimenting with a variety of options to help students combat mental health issues. One university tried a 30-day meditation challenge. Another offered free teletherapy sessions. Many provide free or low-cost physical activity and exercise options. Some campuses stock vending machines with wholesome foods and nutritious snacks encouraging healthy eating.

Other considerations could be prioritizing programs aimed at improving stress management and encouraging professors to be mindful of students' workloads.

What can students do to prioritize their mental health?

- Let sleep take precedence. A sufficient amount of sleep per night—7 to 9 hours—decreases levels of cortisol (the stress hormone) and has been proven to drastically lessen feelings of anxiety.
- Take study breaks. Giving the brain some time off to rest and recharge improves productivity. Try going outside for some fresh air and spend a little time in nature. Even on cold days, a brisk walk can be refreshing and give mental clarity.
- Find a dedicated study space – minimizing distractions helps efficiency. Maybe try studying in the presence of others at a library.
- Eat something nutritious.
- Learn to say no. Balancing work, home and school can be challenging—saying "no" to some commitments preserves energy.
- Take time for self-care. This includes time away from your phone and other electronics. Take a bath. Paint. Try a yoga class. Try setting aside time each day—an hour, 30 or even 15 minutes—to do something that feels good to you and helps you relax. Dedicate some time off for fun with others, too.
- Remember to zoom out; everything is a phase, and this period of intensity may just be an especially tough course or a busy term. We will get through it.
- And finally, speak up. Normalize checking in with each other and prioritizing mental health.



MAKING A **SPLASH** AT THE AQUATIC CENTER

By Taylor Aasen
MYSTICAST EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

“When life gets you down, do you know what you’ve gotta do? Just keep swimming.” The words of Dory from Finding Nemo may resonate with those at Bismarck State College. With the Fall semester flying by, students have learned to “just keep swimming.” The BSC Aquatic and Wellness Center is open year-round for students and others to do just that and more.

Inside, an Olympic-sized pool can be found that is used for competition or recreation. The Tesoro wellness center has strength equipment and cardiovascular equipment that pair with personal viewing screens. A group fitness and dance studio can

also be found within the building.

The BSC Aquatic and Wellness Center hosts events with wibit water toys where floaties fill the pool, and all are welcome to join the fun. They will have wibit water toys on most Sundays from noon to 6 p.m. Dates and times are available on their website.

The Aquatic Center will be hosting Flurry Fest in February. “Flurry Fest is like a park district-wide event for the month of February. We usually do free fitness classes or free pool days.” said Ryan Geerdes, Manager. The whole month of February will have different activities that all can join in on.

The Aquatic Center provides fitness classes including aquabata, yoga, bodypump, aqua dance and much

more. Information about classes and other events hosted in the Aquatic Center can be found on their website or flyers can be picked up inside the building.

Memberships for BSC students are free with proof of a class schedule and student ID. The fitness classes are also free of charge with a BSC membership and there is no requirement to sign up beforehand. However, that excludes glide fit classes.

It is \$25 per semester for an additional membership to Capital Racquet and Fitness Center, which is located behind Menards. Capital Racquet has tennis courts/pickleball courts, walking courses, a weight room, and walking trails.

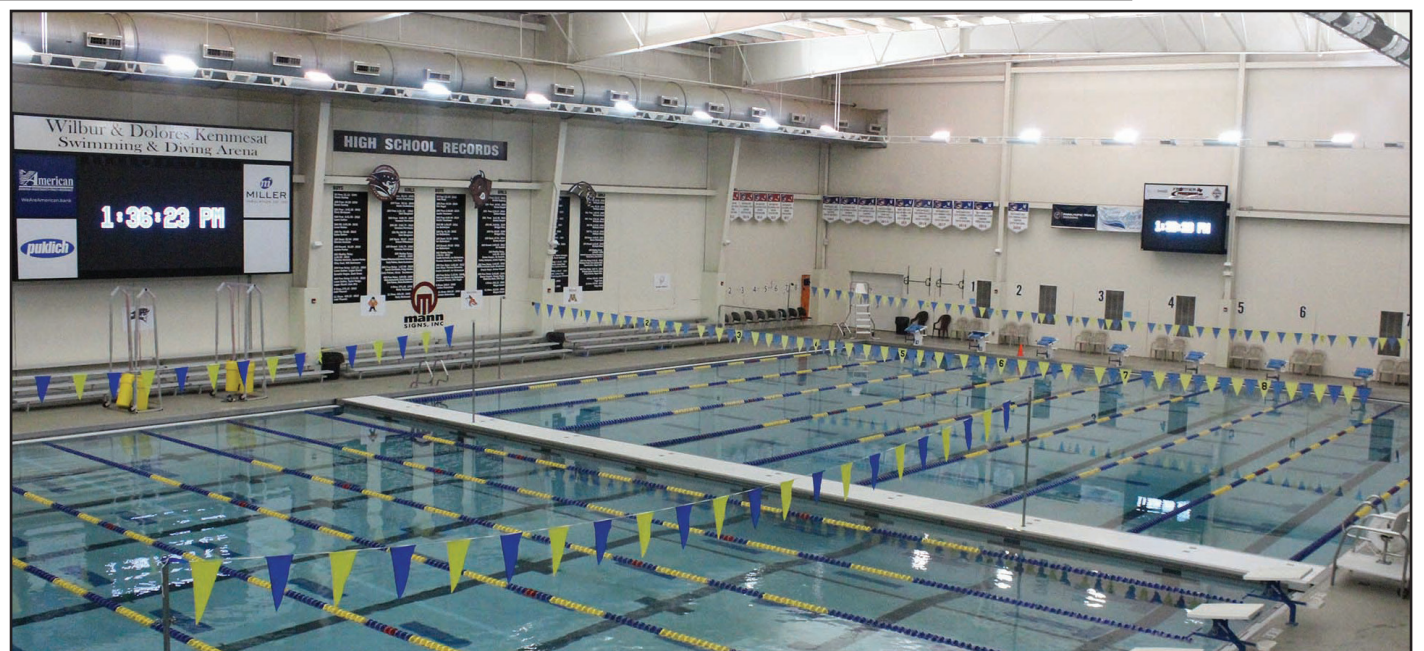
For those wondering whether or not the Aquatic Center will be open over the winter break, Geerdes said that the center will indeed be open.

“We will be open, we are also running a student holiday special, so it’s \$35 for 30-days.” If a student signs up in mid-December the membership will be good through about mid-January. “So if anybody is here for break, they can still come and work out,” said Geerdes.

The Aquatic and Wellness Center is open 7 days a week in the fall and spring semesters but times are subject to change, so be sure to check their website for updated information. Remember to just keep swimming.



The BSC Aquatic and Wellness center is located on the BSC campus and provides an Olympic sized pool for use. (Credit: Taylor Aasen)



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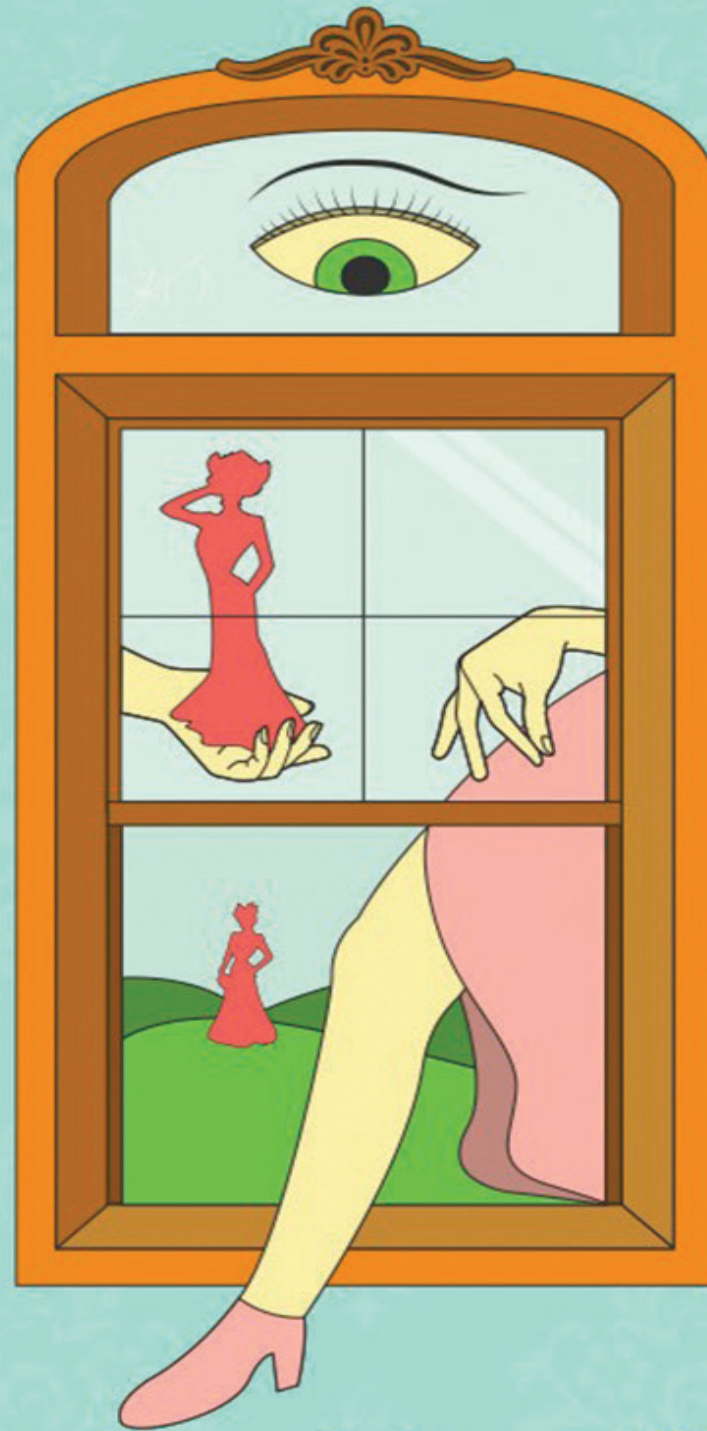
Written By

KATE HAMILL

Adapted From the Novel By

JANE AUSTEN

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